

Claims 24-26 reference the limitation of reducing the thickness of a required layer, such as a polish stop layer, arranged under a dielectric layer. None of the available cited art even discusses the desirability to reduce the thickness of layers underneath dielectric layers. As such, none of the cited art teaches or suggests the limitations of claims 24-26, rendering them patentably distinct over the cited art.

Request for Consideration of Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant filed an Information Disclosure Statement accompanied by a Form PTO-1449 on August 8, 2001. To date, Applicant has not received notification that the references cited in the properly filed Information Disclosure Statement have been considered. Applicant hereby requests that the Examiner initial and return the Form PTO-1449 included with the Information Disclosure Statement of August 8, 2001 or indicate in some other way that the references cited therein have been considered.

CONCLUSION

This response constitutes a complete response to all issues raised in the Office Action mailed May 21, 2003. In view of the remarks traversing the rejections, Applicants assert that pending claims 1-16, 19, 22-27, 29, and 30 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, comments, or suggestions, the undersigned attorney earnestly requests a telephone conference.

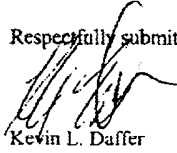
No fees are required for filing this amendment; however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account No. 03-2769/5298-04700.

PETITION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Applicants respectfully petition the Commissioner for a one month extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 within which to respond to the Office Action mailed May 21, 2003, such extension allowing the undersigned until September 21, 2003 to respond.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge the required fee or credit any overpayment to Conley, Rose & Tayon, P.C. Deposit Account No. 03-2769/5298-04700.

Respectfully submitted,



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